

seemed as though it was following us. Several searchlights from different points were flashing their rays in the sky and they all seemed to be converging right over us. Of course they were not but it seemed as though they were. I knew the machine was not watching our road because we passed eight lorries hauling big guns, which the aeroplane would like to have bombed. I reached my hut about 11:20 and was soon in bed and ready to go to sleep, regardless of the heavy bombardment at the front. The flashes of the guns could be seen all across our front.

(Enclosure in diary)

PRIDE AND THE PETTICOAT

BY A GUNNER

Although he was a Hun, we admired his audacity. He came humming out of the summer blue on a sultry afternoon, swooping from nowhere right in the inner guard of half a dozen of our unsuspecting kite balloons. Swift and straight as a falcon he dived, and at the rattle of his machine gun and the flash of his tracer bullets pigmy figures strangely agitated came bobbing and gyrating earthwards under their spreading parachutes.

Whirr! went his gun, and Biff! went the first balloon, a thin trace of fire leading to a scarlet blaze and a gossamer wreckage. Before one could count twelve a second sausage had shriveled into skin and the Hun plane was making tracks for home.

The "Archies" had been taken by surprise. For a moment it looked as if the unwelcome visitor would reach his lines. But suddenly the "Archies" ceased firing, and it was then we saw a British plane pursuing at a pace that could have only one result. The German "sidestepped" twice by intention and once involuntarily. He was neatly winged and he came down in a hurry and stood not on the order of his coming.

He smashed into a cottage like a goat butting through a fence, his propeller going through the thatched roof and his rudder cocking up in the air. The solitary pilot was pitched into a corner of the long orchard little the worse for his fall. He is a small, thin, rather mean-looking young man, and he blinked stupidly at the remains of what had once been an aeroplane. A little dog barked at him, half a dozen fussy hens scolded him, and a very angry and very determined old lady came out of the cottage to investigate him.

She was a typical Flemish dame, massive of build, tenacious in character, and practical in all things. Deliberately and of set purpose she advanced on the dazed airman. She caught him by the collar of his tunic. She shook her fist in his face, and she asked him in the incisive vernacular of the Flemish peasant what he meant by smashing up her house. She ordered him to look at the mess he had made, calculated the cost, and demanded payment, all in a breath. She heaped insults on him, his parents, and his aeroplane.